



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 107 – May 8, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

This week I want to take time to congratulate two very important entities that have contributed so much to the tourism industry in Arizona. This May, Sierra Vista is celebrating its 50th anniversary with several countdown events throughout the month, leading up to a very special celebration on May 26-27. Sierra Vista is not only the hummingbird capital of the world, but a unique community that showcases Arizona's diverse landscape and highlights some of our great outdoor and historical experiences. I am happy that we can include Sierra Vista in our marketing of Arizona, and I wish them a very happy anniversary!

Also celebrating their 50th anniversary this year is our wonderful State Parks system. There are 29 parks in Arizona, and there will be a wide-range of anniversary activities planned throughout the state to help kick off another great 50 years. With a state that is full of experiences and activities for every type of visitor, I am happy to recognize 50 years of Sierra Vista and our State Parks contributing to tourism and adventure in the Grand Canyon State.

Have a good week.

Margie R. Emmert

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Last Chance: Make the Visitors' First Impression a Grand One!

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Grand Impressions workshops series is coming to a close and now is the time to register for the last workshop of the year. Those that attended the first workshop in Bullhead City were impressed by the program, with participants saying "This is the most enjoyable workshop I've ever been to," and "Every year these workshops are a great source of information." Grand Impressions workshops are a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism professionals by offering a Customer Service Training Program featuring: "How to Host International Visitors," a presentation on Arizona tourism attractions, and a mini-familiarization tour of an attraction in the workshop host's area, designed to provide first-hand knowledge of exciting Arizona destinations. The workshops are offered free of charge to travel counselors and hospitality professionals across the state. The workshop will be held from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with lunch provided. Below is the date and location for the final Grand Impressions workshop for this year:

Sierra Vista May 12, 2006

Space is limited! To register, please contact Sarah Martins, Travel Counselor at the Arizona Office of Tourism, at (602) 364-3687 or smartins@azot.gov.

2007 Professional Travel Planner's Guide Publication

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Travel Industry Marketing Division is now publishing the 2007 Professional Travel Planner's Guide (PTPG). With a circulation of 20,000, it will be distributed by AOT's international offices (Japan, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain and Germany) and at domestic and international trade shows and national promotional events. It will also be direct mailed to tour operators and travel agents, as well as in response to client inquiries. This annual comprehensive statewide guide includes detailed information on Arizona including: extensive itineraries, maps, motorcoach and tour information, special events, top attractions, shopping, activities, accommodations, restaurants and receptive and transportation listings. Display Advertising and Directory Listings are available for purchase by Arizona companies - advertising space closes June 7, 2006. Directory Listing Categories include:

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Restaurants

- Transportation

Please call Hennen Publishing at 602-906-3085 for more information or to sign up.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

Last week AOT sent letters to Arizona's Congressional Delegation in support of the Border Trade Alliance's (BTA) recent Resolutions concerning the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). AOT's letter details concerns about WHTI and the potential effects it would have on Arizona's tourism industry, and appeals for support and assistance in these matters. Specific concerns are listed as well, including the impact at Canada and Mexico's border crossings, as well as suggestions for an alternative to a passport. AOT has also requested that a comprehensive public information campaign accompany the implementation of the program. In October, AOT participated during WHTI's Public Comment Phase, sending remarks to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State, voicing these concerns. If you would like a copy of our recent BTA Support Letter, a copy of AOT's October WHTI Commentary, or if you have any questions, please contact Marci Elizondo at (602) 364-3720 or melizondo@azot.gov.

Industry News

Healthy News from Arizona

The Boulders Resort & Golden Door Spa is becoming an all-organic resort and several other developments in Scottsdale, Ariz., are part of an area trend to offer healthier surroundings. The Caleo Resort & Spa, for example, opened its Jurlique Spa. It's described as a "distinctly organic, nature-based experience" with seven treatment rooms and a couples massage room. All of its treatments feature Jurlique products, which are produced by an Australian company that offers 200 organic, plant-based products. The Boulders Resort is implementing large-scale gardens on the grounds that will produce a variety of produce, herbs and spices for the resort's kitchens. Resort guests can also shop at a nearby all natural farmers market and drop off their purchases at the resort's restaurants for preparation. (www.TravelMole.com, 5/3)

Survey Finds U.S. Online Travel Buyers Aren't Created Equal

Though supplier Web site usage in the U.S. has gained momentum, more online travelers still use online travel agencies than buy direct, according to a new consumer survey by PhoCusWright, an online research firm. But the survey found that channel usage varies depending on the type of traveler, the destination and the products being purchased. Online buyers have formed definite allegiances to certain types of Web sites when purchasing different leisure travel components. For example, consumers are much more likely to use an intermediary for combination purchases, such as air, and/or car and/or hotel, for the same trip in a single purchase. They're also more likely to use an online

travel agency to purchase add-ons, such as sightseeing tours and event tickets. Their behavior

changes, however, when making individual air and hotel purchases, for which they are more likely to rely on supplier Web sites.

(www.HSMAIeConnect.org)

Monopoly Rolls Dice, Changes Look

Monopoly, invented in 1935, is getting with the times. The game's updated Here and Now edition, which is due out this fall, will replace Atlantic City landmarks with legendary streets, neighborhoods and national monuments. Until May 12, fans can vote on www.monopoly.com for their favorite landmarks from 22 cities — including New York's Times Square, Chicago's Wrigley Field, Honolulu's Waikiki Beach, Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive and San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. Additionally, the votes will determine where each landmark will appear on the game board, the city with the most votes landing on the coveted Boardwalk spot. Three Phoenix locations are also listed, including Camelback Mountain, Desert Botanical Gardens and Copper Square.

(www.CNNMoney.com)

Pow Wow Opens Saturday in Orlando

An estimated 1,600 travel buyers from 70 countries and more than 200 international journalists are descending on Orlando this weekend for the Travel Industry Association's International Pow Wow. For the five-day event, Orlando's top tourism officials are staging the biggest commercial for its local markets in the past five years. "There's no better way to sell a product than to let people see it, touch it and feel it," said Bill Peeper, executive director for the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau. Orlando will show off its standard goods with food and entertainment catered on separate nights by SeaWorld Orlando, Universal Orlando and Walt Disney World. More than 1,000 U.S. cities and attractions will be attempting to influence Asian, European and other international buyers who sell vacation packages overseas. About \$4 billion worth of transactions are projected to take place with Florida capturing about \$400 million, said Roger Dow, president of TIA. (www.OrlandoSentinel.com/Business)

Marketers Dream Up Gas Giveaways that Include Hotel Stays

With customers transfixed by soaring fuel prices, gasoline giveaways are showing up in marketing from everything from cars to groceries. And they apparently work. In South Dakota, one of the nation's largest ethanol-producing states, the Office of Tourism reports overwhelming response to its online offer of \$20 fuel vouchers to promote the fuel additive. The Iowa Tourism Office is holding a Web site drawing for 25 gas cards worth \$50 each at Kum & Go service stations In Aspen, Colo., where more than 65 percent of visitors drive in, the city's Chamber Resort Association will give \$50 in free gas, plus free bus passes and bike rentals, for an eligible two-night summer stay. And the Loews resort in Coronado, Calif., is developing packages that include gas cards. (Page 1D, USA Today)

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative News

Three travel trade groups--the Travel Industry Association, the Travel Business Roundtable and the National Business Travel Association--have voiced support for an amendment pending in the Senate that would push the deadline for the Western Hemisphere Tourism Initiative back at least a year. TIA and the TBR sent a joint letter to Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, co-sponsors of Senate Amendment 3244. The NBTA expressed the views of its members on the WHTI in letters to the leadership of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The WHTI will require all U.S. citizens, Canadians, citizens of Bermuda and Mexico to have a passport or other accepted secure document to enter or re-enter the U.S. by Jan.1, 2008.

(www.TravelWeekly.com, 5/4; www.ModernAgent.com, 4/28)

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